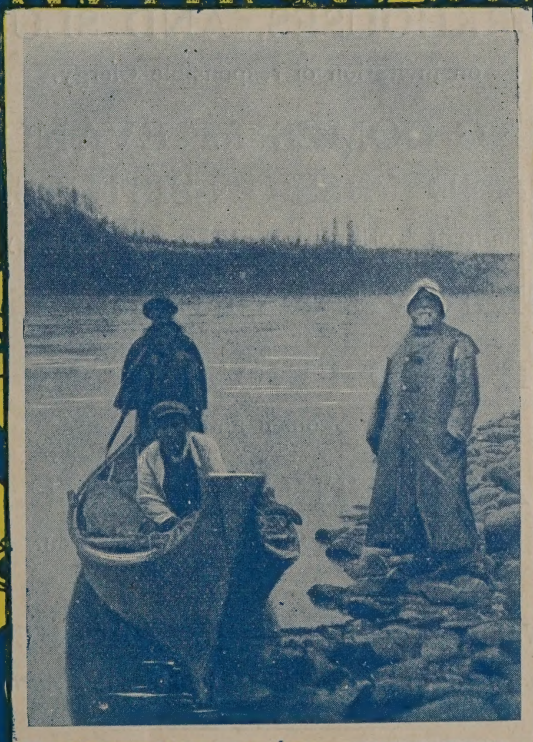


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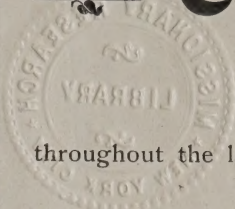
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# THE SAILOR-BISHOP

OR, THE LIFE OF BISHOP WILLIAM  
RIDLEY



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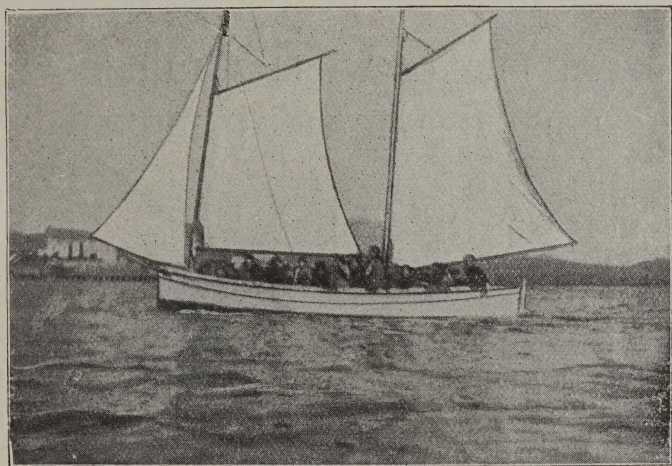
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# THE SAILOR-BISHOP

OR

## THE LIFE OF WILLIAM RIDLEY

FIRST BISHOP OF CALEDONIA



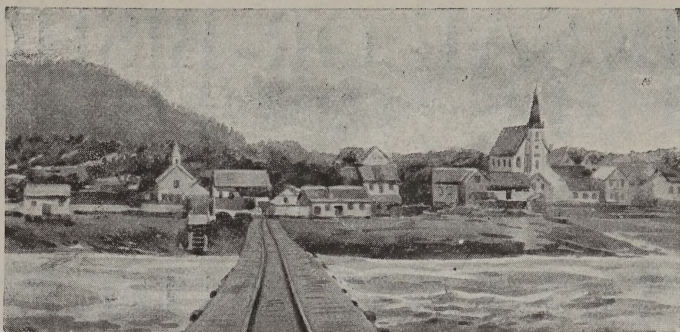
THE BISHOP'S SAILING-BOAT OFF METLAKAHTLA—THE BISHOP STEERING

London

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.

1913

PRICE ONE PENNY



FORT SIMPSON

# The Sailor-Bishop

OR

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM RIDLEY,  
FIRST BISHOP OF CALEDONIA

## CHAPTER I

### A DEVONSHIRE BOY

OF all the counties of England perhaps Devonshire is the most beautiful. Certainly every one whose birthplace it is considers that no other spot is like it. Whether by seaside or upon moorland, on high road or village lane, beauty meets the eye in winter as well as summer. The novelist, the poet and the artist all love to linger on its charms, and the story of one of its renowned inhabitants will certainly possess a fascination for any reader who is a true Devonian.

One of its little old-world towns bears the name of Brixham. Those who have visited it know that it contains a memorial to the Prince of Orange, who landed there in 1688 and made his memorable declaration: 'The liberties of England and the Protestant religion I will maintain.' They will also recall with interest that the writer of the well-loved hymn, 'Abide with me,' the Rev. Henry Lyte, was once Vicar of All Saints', Brixham.

Nearly eighty years ago a boy was born in that little village

who was to be the leader of

a far-distant campaign of the Church of Christ. William Ridley, the merry, healthy and sturdy schoolboy, was one of a Northumbrian family who had settled in South Devon long before his birth. As soon as he was old enough to scamper up and down the long flights of steps peculiar to the place, he began to explore coves and caves, and delighted in every possible adventure of sea and shore. Absolutely fearless, and with mischief always sparkling in his bright eyes, it was not wonderful that he succeeded in getting into hot water with his parents and guardians like any other able-bodied boy of eight or nine. If anything daring was to be done, William Ridley was always prepared to do it. Perhaps he was rather pugnaciously inclined, but then he was always ready to defend the weaker ones.

There are, perhaps, very few boys who are born and brought up by the sea who do not fall in love with it, and William was no exception to this rule. Smaller boys envied him his skill in boating, and in sailing his model ships, for he was never satisfied until he had made a boat that would beat that of every one else. One of his special characteristics was his

determination to do well whatever he did. His brother, a clergyman in the south of England, says that he has known William, when anxious to master the contents of a book, carefully to copy out large portions of it and even to draw its diagrams and pictures.

There is no doubt that if William Ridley had been a boy of the twentieth century he would have made a capital Scout. Some of his escapades sound most exciting. We can quite well imagine how a group of admiring schoolfellows would stand round while on one occasion he climbed for a hundred feet up the church tower and then swarmed up the pole on which the weather-cock swung and turned it round! One of the stories vouched for sounds an almost impossible one. William was only nine years of age when one day he rushed out of school with his usual impetuosity to run along a path which opened on to the old coach road just at the moment when the stage was passing. Somehow he tripped and fell between its front and back wheels, one of which passed over his body. Although he was taken up unconscious and apparently dying, not a bone was broken, or any real injury done to him. Long years afterwards a burly old sea-captain who happened to be one of the pas-

sengers in the coach at the time recalled with a shudder the sickening feeling that passed over him as the coach rose and fell over the boy's body. That may have been the first, but it was not the last hairbreadth escape, by any means, which William Ridley passed through. God had a great work for him to do in the world, and graciously preserved his life.

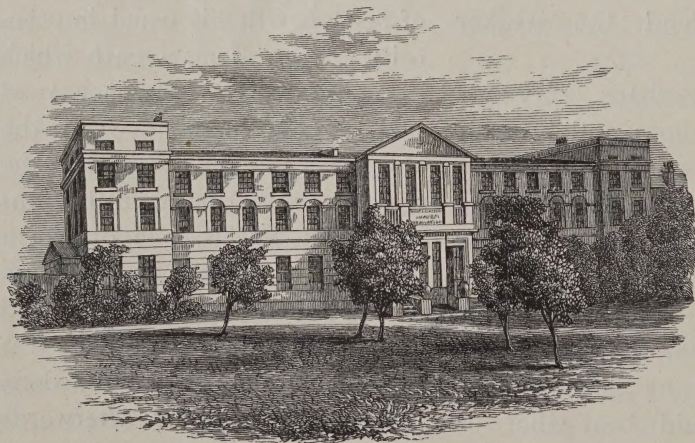
No one, of course, foresaw in those Brixham days that this boy was destined to carry the truths of the Protestant religion, championed by William of Orange,

and expressed in holy song by Henry Lyte, to Indian tribes of the North Pacific shore. Yet his father and mother rejoiced to see their son develop into a manly Christian lad, and one of the most beautiful traits in his character was his deep love and reverence for his parents. His mother he held in the most sacred veneration, and when upon his dying bed, an aged missionary veteran, he was never tired of talking of all that he and his brothers and sisters owed to their parents—a truly noble Christian man and woman.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW RIDLEY'S WORK BEGAN

IN a broad grey street of North London there has stood for many years a building known as the Church Missionary College.



THE CHURCH MISSIONARY COLLEGE AT ISLINGTON, WHERE  
BISHOP RIDLEY WAS TRAINED

Sheltered by a high wall from public observation, it is quite possible to walk along the Upper Street, Islington, and be quite unaware of its existence

—unless attention is attracted to it by the flower-sellers who from time immemorial have made their 'pitch' there. But from that little-known building as from a river bed there has gone forth into the foreign field a stream of men, large numbers of whom have filled spheres of great position and influence.

Every student at Islington, whether he be a 'long' or 'short' course man, is taught various industries in addition to his training in books. He learns not only theology, Greek and Hebrew, but how to do carpentry, blacksmithing, tinsmithing, cobbling, printing and gardening. A Cambridge clerical graduate on one occasion was proud to exhibit a pair of boots soled and heeled by himself! So it was a very practical equipment which the men received before they went out from Islington to the foreign field. Upon the long roll of honoured names that adorn the walls of the College there is not one more greatly revered than that of Bishop Ridley, who passed through its curriculum as far back as 1862. In 1866 he was ordained, and soon after married one who was destined to be a true helpmeet and whose missionary influence was scarcely second to his own.

The Rev. William Ridley gave promise of being a true leader in

the foreign field, and it is not surprising that the Church Missionary Society decided to send him at once to the Edwardes' High School at Peshawar on the North-West Frontier of India.

It was a post full of difficulties and even dangers, and the new missionary and his wife needed courage to take up their abode in the heart of a city occupied by seventy thousand warlike Afghans—practically the only Europeans within the walls. The few Christians who could be counted upon as helpers lived together with the clergyman and his wife: the Indian workers occupying soldiers' quarters on the ground floor, and the missionaries living in rooms built over them.

Mrs. Ridley began at once to devote herself to the women, and finding three different nationalities in Peshawar, she set herself to study their languages. Beginning with Urdu, she went on to learn Pushtu and then took up Persian. For each language she engaged a teacher, and before long was able to give Bible lessons to some of the women and girls, and by her winning disposition found an entrance into the zenanas of some of the leading Moslem houses. Like her husband, she excelled in whatever she undertook. Soon after she had begun to conduct

a girls' school, one of her pupils—a blind girl—was taught by her so patiently and persistently that she was able to repeat the first twenty-two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel from memory.

But the Riddleys' term of service in India was a short one. His health failed from repeated attacks of fever, and after four years

Mr. Ridley and his devoted wife were compelled to lay down their task and return to England. But God had other work in store for them both. In the next chapter we shall see how useful all the training that Islington stood for was to the man who was to become a pioneer in the lone North-West of the great North-American continent.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FOUNDING OF METLAKAHTLA

GR<sup>E</sup>AT events have small beginnings! In that fashionable spa resort, Tunbridge Wells, in the year 1856, some friends of the Church Missionary Society gathered together, as their wont is, to hold a meeting. They invited as speakers Captain James C. Prevost, R.N., a naval officer who had just returned from the Pacific Ocean and was deeply impressed by the degradation of the Indians living on British territory; and the Rev. Joseph Ridgeway, Editor of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (now called the *Church Missionary Review*), and father of the present Bishops of Salisbury and Chichester. Captain Prevost represented that while the natural condition of the Indians was bad enough, they were now being exposed to new danger from white

traders and miners who were beginning to find their way to these coasts, bringing their 'fire water,' their reckless way of living, and their contempt for 'savages.' He earnestly appealed to the Church Missionary Society's representative from head-quarters that he would induce the Committee to begin a Mission in that spot. The Editorial Secretary's reply was not very encouraging. The Committee's hands were full of new projects. They wanted to signalize the conclusion of the Crimean War by planting a Mission at Constantinople; they were wishing to extend the Punjab Mission by occupying Multan; and also to advance into the newly annexed kingdom of Oudh. What chance was there then for the few sheep in the wilderness beyond the

Rocky Mountains? However, Mr. Ridgeway invited Captain Prevost to write an article in his magazine, and he did so, demonstrating very clearly that the sixty thousand Indians of the coasts of Vancouver were worth saving. They were not idolaters; they were by no means bigoted; with care they could become civilized; and they possessed some virtues rarely displayed by savage races. The women, for example, made devoted

wives and mothers, and drunkenness was almost wholly unknown amongst the people.

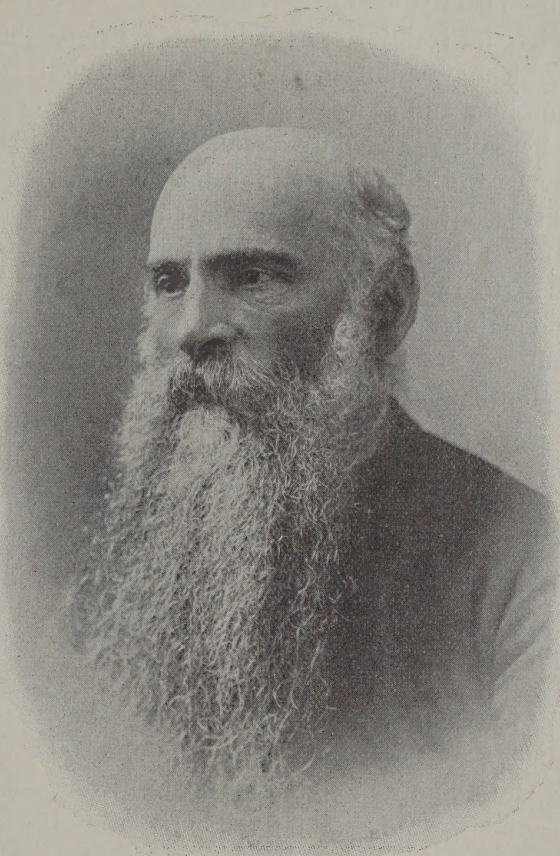
Four or five months after writing that article, Captain Prevost was suddenly ordered back to the North Pacific coast.

Immediately he went to Salisbury Square and offered a free passage for a missionary. The great and good Henry Venn, then the Society's Honorary Clerical Secretary, wrote thus about the interview in his private diary:—

‘Tuesday, December 2, 1856. — Captain Prevost, who is going to the Pacific in one of the finest steam frigates of the Navy, called on me . . . anxious to offer a free passage for a missionary and his wife.

He would himself introduce them to their new station and do everything in his power to support them as long as he himself should be in that neighbourhood.’

Of course, the question arose



THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM RIDLEY, D.D.,  
FIRST BISHOP OF CALEDONIA

at once, Who should go? Some little time before, a village missionary meeting in Yorkshire on a drenching wet night had been attended by only half a dozen listeners; but one of them, William Duncan, had been led to offer himself to the Society for training as a schoolmaster. The Committee's choice fell upon him, and at a few days' notice he sailed—the only English missionary to a hitherto unreached race in one of the remotest corners of the British Empire. His mission was to the Zimshian Indians on the mainland.

How keenly one realizes the facilities of journeying in the present day as compared with that period! It was on December 23 that H.M.S. *Satellite* sailed from Plymouth carrying on board Captain Prevost and his protégé, but it was not until October 1 of the following year that Duncan landed on the spot where the new Mission was to begin! Like other Hudson's Bay Company's trading posts, Fort Simpson consisted of a few houses, stores and workshops, surrounded by a fence twenty feet high, formed of trunks of trees. The inhabitants consisted of about twenty white men or half-breeds, with the wives and children of some of them. Outside the fort was a large village of Zimshian Indians, comprising some two hundred and fifty wooden houses. Their de-

graded and barbarous customs were very painful to the young missionary; but with infinite patience and perseverance, after eight months of patient labour he had sufficiently picked up the language to make his first Gospel address. From this time the work went quietly on until the medicine men of the tribe, realizing the growing influence of the missionary, raised an outcry against it, and Duncan's life over and over again was in peril. Yet before very long the head chief,—Legaic,—who had been the leader in violence and murderous threats, himself appeared at school and sat down to learn with the rest.

In 1860 the first convert had professed his faith in Christ on his dying bed, and in 1861 the firstfruits of the Mission were seen in the baptism of nineteen adults and four children. Duncan's work grew. He planned a Christian colony, realizing that the head-quarters of the Mission must be fixed at some place removed from the evil influence of ungodly white men, and chose Metlakahtla, a beautiful spot seventeen miles south of Fort Simpson. Under his teaching and guidance Metlakahtla became a pattern village and the official centre of all good work of every kind among the coast Indians.

Within ten years of Duncan's first arrival two hundred and



THE MEDICINE MAN AT WORK: BURNING THE SUPPOSED 'SPIRIT' OF SICKNESS

seventy-eight baptisms of adult converts had taken place. In after years Mr. Duncan left

Metlakahtla and went to Alaska, and there founded a new station. Since that time he has not been

in connexion with the Church Missionary Society, but he will always be honoured as the courageous pioneer missionary who paved the way for the Gospel of Peace in that once warlike spot.

## CHAPTER IV

### WAGING WARFARE

IN 1879, the vast diocese of British Columbia was divided into three, and for the northern section, — Caledonia, including mostly the C.M.S. mission stations on the Pacific Coast,—the Church Missionary Society was asked to nominate a bishop. Their choice fell upon the Rev. William Ridley, their ex-missionary of Peshawar, who was then the energetic vicar of St. Paul's, Huddersfield; and on St. James's Day, July 25 of that same year, Bishop Ridley was consecrated. He and his wife sailed from Liverpool on September 13, and reached Metlakahltla on October 14 — an easier and speedier journey than would have been thought possible a few years earlier.

Bishop Ridley described his diocese as reaching from Cape St. James and Dean Channel 52 deg. N. lat. to the 60th parallel, and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, including many islands. These islands he would refer to as 'gems in a setting that perfectly reflects the grass and pine fringing the sea's

glossy surface, as well as the background of snow-patched mountains.'

The Bishop proceeded at once to visit the various stations, and as only canoes were available even for crossing stormy seas, he was often in danger of his life. Within a few days of his arrival he and nine Indians went a hundred miles in a canoe that two men could lift, hollowed out of a tree. In the night a gale came on, and the Bishop wrote: 'We were as nearly lost as saved men could be. Unless I get a steamer, a new Bishop will soon be wanted, for a very short episcopal career is probable.' He had to wait nearly two years, however, before a steamer, the little *Evangeline*, was provided.

Bishop Ridley, describing his first voyage in her, wrote thus with his graphic pen:—

'It is 10.30, and my turn to be on board. The moon shines brilliantly on a glassy sea. The Indian at the helm is singing "Rock of Ages," but he must go

to bed. The only other person on board is the European engineer, and he is fast asleep. We must go on until we reach the Skeena to-morrow morning, as there is no harbour nearer. There we shall spend Sunday, and, D.V., go on to Metlakahtla on Monday morning.'

This was not the only time that the Bishop had to be captain and chief engineer. Some years later he wrote home :—

'What would your Committee think could I have stepped into their Board Room wiping my

black hands in cotton waste to remove the grease from them!'

The winter of 1880-81 was spent by the Bishop far up the Skeena River, and from his boat he wrote unique and thrilling letters to the *Church Missionary Gleaner* such as have been preserved in permanent form in the book called *Snapshots from the North Pacific*.\*

Here are extracts from his log-book written in June, 1880 :—

'I am writing this in a canoe on a wide reach of the Skeena River, and last Sunday was the tenth



A CAÑON ON THE SKEENA RIVER

\* A charming book published by the Church Missionary Society, price 1s. 6d. net.

since March I have spent on the sea or river, or in the forest. My hearers have been people of all sorts and conditions. There have been the downright sort, some Heathen, some Christian; and Christians who are Heathen at heart; and Heathen who are all but Christians. The first were so ignorant of Jesus Christ that the one who asked whether He was a man or a woman was not behind the rest but only more inquisitive! My hearers have been sailors, traders, loafers, miners; Greeks, Germans and Norwegians, French, Maltese and Britons, Russians, Kanakas and Yankees, Chinese and Canadians, Jews and Gentiles; whites and greys, browns and blacks; Caucasians, Semites and Mongolians; Indians of the salt water, and fresh-water Indians; hunters, fishers, packers and nondescripts; round heads, flat heads and peaked heads, all beautifully supplied with hair as black as jet, sometimes short and clean, sometimes foul, greased and matted.

'I have preached on the beach and on shipboard; in the miner's cabin and trader's log hut; in the Indian branch-built hunting lodge and his larger but less agreeable village home, where the smoke fails to subdue the pervading ill odour; also amid the tangled forest on the coast and the clouds of mosquitoes on the

prairie. My churches have been decorated in season and out of season, but have had neither pulpit nor prayer-desk, belfry nor organ. The care of Nature called for no help or scrutiny from Archdeacon or Rural Dean, churchwarden or vergers. And oh, the joy of it! There have been no church expenses, no collections or painful pleading for subscriptions, and no newspaper reporters present to make a hash of the proceedings. Of most of my churches the builder and maker is God.

'The high wind at sea somewhat risked the harmony when it made the steamer's funnel howl and her rigging shriek, but never marred it really; while nothing could be softer or more sustained than its notes ashore as it played on the tops of the forest trees.

'But it has been a far higher pleasure to see proofs of God's Spirit awakening dead souls through the power of Jesus' name.'

Instead of settling into their newly built house at Fort Simpson, the Bishop and his wife—the first Englishwoman to navigate the Skeena—rented a cabin at Hazelton and began operations in the heart of the enemy's country. Again we quote the Bishop's own words, for nothing more graphic could be written:—

'My first operation was to open a day school, so the battle began. My pupils were my infantry. Few or many, I drudged away daily at A, B, C and 1, 2, 3. The school grew—nearly two hundred attended. The medicine men who are the priests of this Heathenism, took alarm. A band of the painted wretches danced round the entrance to the school. As the din stopped work, I stepped quickly up to the chief performer, took him by the shoulders,

and, before he could recover his self-possession, had him at the river's brink, and assured him I should assist him farther down the next time he interrupted my work. This prompt action seemed to unnerve the party.

'My infantry have done famous havoc in the enemy's camp. The three R's have been taught. The first class have read half through the second book, first series, and the writing of some is remarkably good. The pictorial Bible lesson was a great attrac-



INDIANS  
CANOEING

tion. The school has been a marked success.

'Now I must describe my artillery practice. The medicine chest is my ammunition tumbrel. Stoppered phials have been my Armstrong guns, and my shells were hurled on the foe from pill boxes. During school hours bodies of the wounded would accumulate, and, school over, my artillery would be plied. Five hundred and fifty applications for healing have been made, and if—as the medicine men say—I have killed some, I have relieved so many that I am the most famous medicine man known to the nation.'

The results of that winter campaign will only be known in eternity, but it was one only of

many which the Bishop was to carry through in the course of his eventful career in the far North-West. The first years of work in the Mission were full of difficulties and hard work for the good Bishop and his wife. The hard work they rejoiced in, and the difficulties they met with prayer and patience. Bishop Ridley gave much time to translational work until he had rendered parts of the New Testament and the Prayer Book into Zimshian and many well-known hymns. When the Bishop first read to the Indians his Gospel of St. Matthew in their own language, one man exclaimed in picturesque fashion, 'We saw through a narrow slit: now the door is wide open, we see the whole picture.'

## CHAPTER V

### THE SAILOR-BISHOP

ALL who knew good Bishop Ridley and his wife knew their love for children, for flowers, and for animals. Mrs. Ridley's chief recreation was cultivating a garden round their house: roses, carnations, sunflowers—all came to perfection under her fostering care.

Stories of Bishop Ridley's four-footed friends might well fill a

book! 'Jet,' a faithful retriever, was the devoted follower of his master for many years, and when he died neither master nor mistress would allow any other dog to take his place. Some of the Bishop's pets were unusual. One was a sheep which came to Metlakahltla when quite young with a number of others, destined eventually to be made into mutton.

This particular sheep and the Bishop became great friends. It was not only allowed to come into the garden, but invaded the house. Its favourite place was under the dining-room table, where it reposed hidden by the long cloth. At last, however, its familiarity became too much even for its friends to put up with. When the sheep began to walk upstairs into the bedrooms, it had to be sorrowfully forbidden the house.

The next favourite was a wild goose. Flocks of these birds often came to the town, and the Indians would catch them for food. On one occasion, one of the Indians cut the wing-feathers of a gosling so that it could not fly away, and gave it to the Bishop as a present. To the amusement of everybody, the goose attached itself to the Bishop and waddled about after him, not only in the garden but through the town, much to the amusement of the children, who would call with delight to one another, 'Come and see the Bishop and his goose!' Then came a time when the Bishop was taken ill, and for six weeks the goose could not see his big man friend, although he came again and again to the window, through which the nurses would not let him enter. At last, repulsed so often, he flew away, and by the time the Bishop was well enough

to resume his walks with his web-footed companion, the bird had disappeared.

As may be supposed, the Bishop of Caledonia had other duties beside those connected with his house and parish at Metlakahltla. The oversight of a diocese which extended for hundreds of miles entailed an enormous amount of travelling by land and by water, in summer and in winter; and it is because of his adventurous journeys by canoe on the great River Skeena and on the open sea in a sailing boat that Bishop Ridley will ever be known as the 'Sailor-Bishop.'

At first Mrs. Ridley bravely accompanied him in his travels, but as work increased at home she generally remained behind. Here is the Bishop's own account of one stormy sea voyage:—

'One early morning at dawn I started with five of my lads as crew, and had a light but fair wind to a small settlement twenty miles distant. On our return an adverse gale sprang on us. For miles our course lay between an extensive reef to seaward and a rocky coast, from which in three places dangerous reefs stood out. While the daylight lasted our hearts were light. But darkness came. To beat to windward amongst those rocks in the darkness that became black, and to

## The Sailor-Bishop

be drenched with the cold spray from the wave-crest, was a very different thing. We often heard the breakers, but could see nothing in the darkness. It was past midnight when we felt our way into a sheltered cove to anchor for the night. There we thanked God, and huddled under the decked-in part forward in our drenched clothes, and slept till daylight. As soon as the storm

We put into a small harbour at sundown, intending to sail again at daybreak the next morning. But the weather changed, and it blew so heavily that we dragged our anchor, and there we were, wind-bound three days. As game abounded, food was plentiful.'

Masset had been the scene of a terrible raid by the bloodthirsty Haidas of Queen Charlotte Is-



AN ENCAMPMENT ON A RIVER BANK

abated we again put to sea, and surprised our people by entering the harbour under full canvas and flying colours. Our arrival relieved many anxieties.'

A visit paid to Massett, a little settlement on Queen Charlotte Island, about a hundred miles from Metlakatla, is thus referred to:—

'I preferred sailing to steaming. The wind was light and shifting.

lands long ago. A great transformation had been effected. 'The prettiest church in the diocese stood on the hill overlooking the seaside village, whose shore was fringed with large forest trees.' Not far off was the school-house, and farther back, nestling in a wood, stood the mission house.

'At length we reached Massett,'

wrote the Bishop. 'Up went flags when I was seen approaching, and as I stepped on shore all the Haidas then in the village pressed round, together with the missionary who was in charge, to shake hands. At once three canoes were dispatched to call in the people from their seal and otter hunting.

'Some two hundred of them came back on the wings of the wind. On Saturday I consecrated the pretty church, and at the west entrance I was met by the principal men; the churchwardens and sidesmen carried long gilded and carved staves of their own workmanship. A choir of thirty voices sang an anthem in perfect time and harmony. I counted two hundred and sixty-four Indians and six white men in the church at the consecration. Then came some churchings, seventy-two baptisms, and sixty-three persons were confirmed. There seemed to be a swarm of babies, who piped and crowed unheeded by all but myself. Lastly, I married eighteen couples. I was tired out that Saturday night, and the weariness almost banished sleep.

'Next day I preached three times, administered the Holy Communion, assisted by the missionary, to ninety communicants, and as some candidates arrived too late for the Saturday confirmation, I held another on Sunday.

The offertory amounted to \$150 (=£30), of which at least £20 came from the Indians. On Monday, when the three crews that had called the rest came to be paid, they received their wages, and handed it back again at once as their offering to God.

'It will prolong my letter, but I must introduce a small incident. Just at the end of the line of candidates came a young man in his workaday clothes, in marked contrast with the well-dressed multitude. He knelt before me, was confirmed, and turned back to his seat. He was barefooted, and left a track of blood along the chancel aisle. I had observed that a churchwarden had taken the missionary's place in marshalling the candidates, but until later was not aware that the young man had entered the church in haste, bathed in perspiration, and had appealed to the missionary in distress lest he should be passed by. He had been prepared for baptism, and the missionary, having appointed the churchwarden to his post in the chancel, took the young fellow to the font at the west end, baptized him, and was in time to present him for confirmation. The baby choruses throughout the church had barred from my ears the sound of the service proceeding as I was confirming.

'When the canoe arrived to call

his comrades on the western coast, he was separated from them, and did not return to the rendezvous until nightfall. He guessed the reason of its emptiness, and at daybreak set off for Massett, twenty miles distant, wore off his shoes on the trackless and rocky coast, and, as I have written, reached the church in a torn and worn condition. I doubt not but that the heavenly gift bestowed upon him was in blessed proportion to his earnestness in seeking it.

‘Foremost among the principal men was a former high priest of Heathenism, a clever man who believed in himself. Formerly, as he told me, he held converse with demons, who would come at his call; but now angels come unbidden, and so fill his mind with

bright thoughts that he cannot help smiling, and people often ask him why he laughs when alone. He is a good druggist, draughtsman, carver and counsellor. Better than all, and the crown of all, he is an energetic and consistent Christian.

‘Only twelve years before, the first missionary to the Haidas stepped on the shore where I was so kindly welcomed. He found Heathenism in full possession, and in the height of its degrading power over souls and bodies. For the first year the missionary, his brave wife, and their infant found shelter in the corner of one of the great Indian houses; objects of curiosity at first, then of hostility on the part of the medicine men, but now of affection and respect.’

## CHAPTER VI

### MORE INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL

AT certain seasons of the year the Indians left their home at Metlakahtla in search of fur-coated animals in the forest, or to go to the great salmon fisheries, where they found employment in canning fish for exportation. So real was the work of God in the hearts of these Indians that the Bishop on his journeyings would come across evidences that

his work, and that of the missionaries his colleagues, was bearing much fruit. Of one such incident he wrote as follows:—

‘Across a branch of a river a camp fire shot up among the trees. After our evening meal, as we sat gazing into our own fire, we heard borne on the still night air sweet sounds of holy song.

They, we then knew, were Christian Indians praising the Lord Jesus Whom we also loved. Then followed silence. We knew they then were praying. We prayed in our hearts. Sweet is the communion of saints. Talk about missionary perils and hardships!—there is not a drawing-room in London where heaven seems so nigh as it does to us sometimes in our wanderings. On our side we lifted up our thankful voices, tuned all the better because of the emotion caused by the song beyond the river. Across there our praise would kindle holy thoughts in the hearts of the tired Indians as they lay stretched out to sleep. I then prayed with my crew, and we all lay down without a care to rest and sleep, though

the beasts of the forest move and seek their meat from God. "From God," therefore, we were safe.'

If Bishop Ridley could say with the Apostle Paul, 'in journeyings oft,' he certainly could also add, 'in perils oft.' The rapids of the Skeena River were not only difficult, but often very dangerous. Nine times the brave Bishop ascended these rapids by canoe, and again and again his life was saved in answer to prayer. His lightheartedness stood him in good stead. This is what he remarked about it himself :—

'I am too old a sailor to dwell on perils by water, although sailors are licensed to spin yarns. To the beginner they are terrify-



A VIEW OF MASSETT, QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND

ing, but the old salt has steadier nerves and because of oft deliverances comes to think he has a charmed life. Some time ago, in returning from a visit to an Indian Mission where I heard the missionary was sick, I was caught in so furious a fair wind that my crew became as silent as fish as we swept over the huge waves in my trusty open boat under sail. For miles we kept company with the American mail steamer, though eventually she left us far behind. A stretch of forty miles in the open sea, at nine miles an hour at least, in an open boat, speaks for itself to a sailor. It would mean to a landsman constant dread of being engulfed. The muscular effort in controlling the sheet and the tiller taxed all my powers, and left a legacy of aches for many days.'

One of the most interesting results of the Bishop's journeys was the establishment of a girls' home for the children of the gold miners. How that work began can only adequately be described in the Bishop's graphic words :—

'As soon as the miners who had married Indian women knew that I had determined on instituting a girls' home on my return to the coast, they wanted to give me their little girls. I brought away with me one little

mite, and another came on soon after, and these are now, with others, comfortably settled in the new home. The child I brought with me shrank from my Indians, saying she did not like to sleep with *Siwashes*, a corruption of the French *sauvage*. But my tent measures eight feet by six only, and into it are stowed my kitchen-box, provision case, valise, gun and bed! The walls are eighteen inches high, and my head just clears the ridge-pole. A less lavish enjoyment of space must content me that I may entertain the rosy-cheeked little maiden who objected to *Siwashes*. I stow her away to leeward, with my waterproof and overcoat as a bed and my thin coat as pillow. She had two blankets, but one was soaking wet. The single one I doubled over her, and then tucked her up with one of my own. "Where is your pillow?" I asked. "Me and Eddie [her smaller brother] had one, and I gave it to him." This made me love the little soul. She slept better than I did, for that night the frost was, I thought, bitter.'

The good Bishop had other companions than the tiny Indian child on occasion. The forest mice sought shelter from the sharp north-westerly wind in the warmth of the Bishop's canvas

tent. Even he, sound sleeper as he was, could not rest, as one of these little visitors would find its way to its nest through the Bishop's ear, though it was 'too fat to get far in.' Another would nestle in his beard, and might have had a comfortable berth if it had not been so restless. In fact, the Bishop remarked: 'As bed-fellows they are not objectionable so long as they keep their feet still, but they will not! The most worrying was he who kept scraping under my pillow among the springy branches of the hemlock pine. I scuffled, turned over my pillow, pounded it, and spoke angry words, and all in vain. I was trying to sleep in *his* forest, and he would not stop nibbling his favourite bark to allow a tired Bishop to be there without taxing his patience. He was an unfeeling little Republican.'

Mice were not the worst of invaders. In one deserted house where Bishop Ridley stayed rats swarmed, and *they* were surpassed in wanton cruelty by mosquitoes. In one of his letters Bishop Ridley remarked: 'Perhaps you smile, and think mosquitoes a feeble folk. They have made me black in the face. I have shut up my tent with swarms of these plagues, like such as worried Pharaoh. Then I have lighted a fire and

produced the most disgusting of smoke nuisances, until my eyes filled with tears that made channels down my sooty face. I have then lain down and seen these monsters cling to the tent until asphyxiated and then drop off dying, and I gloating over this wholesale destruction.'

On one occasion, however, even a mosquito rendered service to the Bishop. On the twenty-seventh anniversary of his wedding day he relates that he paddled sixteen hours in steady rain, and during the week's travelling slept two nights in the bottom of the open boat anchored close inshore. In this position, as he dozed he was startled by what he at first thought was a steamer's whistle, but it was only the buzz of a bold mosquito exploring his ear. Being wide awake, the Bishop became conscious that on one side of him his blankets were soaking in the rain-water that accumulated in the boat round him. Wringing them out, he tucked them more tightly round him for the night, and apparently escaped all harm. But many pages might be filled with similar experiences of the Sailor-Bishop.

It can easily be understood that a man with so large a heart and tender spirit would try to act as medical missionary to his isolated people whenever opportunity

occurred. Such a beneficent 'medicine man' soon secured fame, and this is what the Bishop says of some of his experiences as he neared the banks of the river preparatory to disembarking:—

'The moment I was recognized many were suddenly seized with hacking coughs. On they came, the lameness of some increasing every moment. Sores are un-

The serious cases are carefully attended to; the half-real pretenders, without a sound organ (as they say) in their bodies, are treated with grave sympathy, and large doses of medicated water made nasty. Faith they mix with it, and get cured—so they say. I am known for hundreds of miles as a medicine man.'

The sailing boats in time to



A VIEW OF HAZELTON ON THE SKEENA RIVER

bound, hands pressed on those parts that suffer from indigestion, the symptoms are graphically described. I gravely listen as I open my medicine chest, taking care to have a kettle full of pure river water at hand; pots of ointment become lighter, sticking-plaster is disposed of, pills are wrapped in fresh leaves, teacups are brought for cough mixture, salts and senna are begged for.

come were replaced by the steamers, but it was long before those days that Mrs. Ridley, the Bishop's brave wife, ascended the Skeena River in an open boat.

It was winter; the river would soon begin to freeze; but the missionary's wife knew that her husband was troubled because Hazelton, a mission station far up the river, was just then without a missionary. She knew that

whoever might go would have to stay there all the winter; for the river once frozen, no return would be possible until spring. But she surprised the Bishop by saying, 'Let me go. I will hold it together until you find somebody else.' The Bishop consented. It took them fifteen days to get to Hazelton, and the boatmen would only allow just time enough to place Mrs. Ridley in her log-house with her winter provisions before taking her husband away back down the fast-

freezing river. There the brave lady stayed for a whole year, working as a friend and missionary to Indians and miners. So isolated was she that the Bishop journeyed to England and back without her knowledge. When a missionary was found for Hazelton, Mrs. Ridley was able to leave. Her self-sacrificing ministry had not been in vain. The miners said that she was the best 'parson' they ever had, and the Indians called her 'Mother.'

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STORY OF SHEUKSH

ONE of the most wonderful triumphs of grace in the history of Christian Missions is the story of the Indian chief Sheuksh. When this some-time fierce Pagan became a simple believer in Christ, Bishop Ridley wrote: 'Had we a peal of bells, I would have them rung, because the most able, most stubborn and boldest warrior of Satan has submitted to Christ, and publicly before his own tribe has promised to serve Him as long as He keeps him alive on earth.'

Kitkatla, the home of Sheuksh, is an island fifty miles south of Metlakahtla. Captain Prevost

was the first to preach the Gospel there in 1879. Three years later the Bishop sent a teacher, Luke, to the Kitkatlas; a little church was built, and within three months twenty-seven converts were brought in canoes to Metlakahtla to be baptized. Not long afterwards some of the Kitkatla Christians came back to the Bishop with a woeful story. Luke, the spokesman, explained, 'They have burnt the church, they have torn up the Bibles, they have blasphemed the Saviour! Only the ashes remain and a great victory for the devil.'

The Bishop's brave-hearted

reply was: 'No, never; the war is only just begun. Jesus Christ will win. *You* are not burnt. The devil has laughed before. God will laugh at him, and you will laugh. Be strong.'

But for more than a year no teacher was suffered to land among the Kitkatlas, and no public service could be held. Yet the harder the persecution, the purer became the life of the Christians there; and a few years later another deputation of Kitkatlas arrived at the Bishop's house with the joyful news of answered prayer. Sheuksh,

chief of the Kitkatlas, the last to rally round him the braves of an old system that made them as proud and ruthless as Moslems, had bowed before the Cross.

Sheuksh had invited a great meeting of the tribe at his house—most of them thought it was to discuss plans for the winter.

They did not know his secret. The chief, arrayed in a scarlet robe bedecked with mother-of-pearl and embroideries, was seated on a settle; on the other three sides of the great square, awaiting the opening of parliament, Christians and Heathen

mingled together. But nearest to the chief were seated six of his leading men, declared enemies of the Church. Up rose Sheuksh grandly; and though the Christians were too numerous to apprehend any successful attempt to curtail their liberty, yet they antici-



A MEDICINE MAN IN HIS ROBES OF OFFICE

pated an attempt to do so. He stretched out his arms, as if to display his sturdy person and the robe that had figured in many heathen orgies.

'I wear,' said he, 'the outward sign of former ignorance and of ancient customs, that never changed until the white man's

faith was preached. I thought I ought to keep them, for I am no wiser than the ancients who kept them and did great deeds. I loved them. So did you. I struggled to maintain them. I have defied the Queen's officers. They threatened me as late as this last springtide with prison and disgrace. I told them I would not avoid them. I also resisted the Bishop and suffered not his teachers to land. I concealed not the wish of my heart. You know to what lengths I went. Most of you approved my doing. But the end has come. Let the waves tell the story of our fathers. Our children's lips will form no fit words. Where do dead things go? This goes with them.' Here he threw off his scarlet robe and the other insignia of a heathen chief. 'I am naked, but can clothe my body with the white man's clothes.' This he there and then proceeded to do. 'What will cover my heart? I can wrap nothing round it. God sees it, and He knows all the past and the present. He knows I

am ignorant and sinful. He has this summer made me know it. I am now dressed like a Christian. Those tokens of the dark past I will never touch again. What shall I do next? I am too old to go to school. I cannot read. Will Jesus Christ have me? Will He help me? I will never turn back. I give myself to God. Now pray for me—pray, pray! I want to know what will please Him. I must know. Begin at once to pray.'

The whole company bowed their heads in silence until one of the earliest converts, named Stephen Gaiumtkwa, broke it with uttered words of earnest supplication. This ended, a Christian of the same standing, the most diligent in the Scripture, his name Samuel, started Wesley's hymn, 'Hark, the herald angels sing,' and many voices took it up. Then Samuel recited a verse of Holy Scripture, and as Luke



KITKATLA, THE HOME OF THE CHIEF SHEUKSH

described it, 'broke it small for Sheuksh to eat.' James Dakaiya prayed, after which Samuel said the first verse of the hymn, 'Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,' and after it had been sung, expounded another passage of Scripture. Daniel Whadibo prayed, and next was sung, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus.' Charles Luahaitk prayed, and then was sung, 'Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove.' Prayer and praise and Holy Scripture followed in like succession for seven hours and a half.

It was indeed a veritable triumph of the Gospel. During that memorable meeting the men who had held to Sheuksh in his prolonged struggle with the Christians one by one, between the intervals of prayer, rose and solemnly renounced the past and professed themselves catechumens.

Not a shred of outward Hea-thenism existed in what, till lately, was its one stronghold. Not a soul but was pledged in this wonderful manner to live and die as a Christian. The reality of the change in this Indian chief was graphically portrayed by the native teacher whom Bishop Ridley sent first of all to the Kitkatlas, under whom the first converts were prepared for baptism. 'Now Sheuksh is converted,' he remarked to

Bishop Ridley, 'what cannot God do? Wonderful! That lord of iniquity converted! That root of mischief plucked up! That right hand of the devil broken! Who can resist Him if Sheuksh cannot? God has shaken the mountain. God's auger has bored through him. [Here Samuel imitated the movements of a carpenter using an auger.] God turned and made it cut into him—slowly, through knots as hard as stone. So, so, so [suited the action to the words]. Oh, the tools of God! They go through men's hearts. They are sharp, but oiled, and let in the light. God knew His work. Now we see it.'

After musing awhile, Samuel in an undertone remarked, as if to himself, 'The devil has lifted up his head at Fort Simpson, and here has struck a blow [he alluded to a case of drunkenness], but at Kitlan I see his mouth in the sand. It is hard for him to meet with Jesus, the Son of God.'

'Now I have finished. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, *is now*, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'

Two years after Sheuksh's baptism (he had chosen for his baptismal name William Ewart Gladstone) Bishop Ridley wrote:—



THE LATE MRS. RIDLEY

Jesus Christ. Those who knew him in the days of darkness—Sheuksh the autocrat, the severe,

‘His the proud, the lion—cannot but very extol the power which has transformed him into Sheuksh the gentle, the true, the lamb.’

Sheuksh and his wife, ‘Rose,’ were confirmed together in January, 1897. Rose was commissioned as a Church Army Officer. For ten years Sheuksh lived a faithful and consistent life as a Christian chief, and passed away on February 7, 1901, after a long illness borne with patient fortitude and calm resignation.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOTHER OF METLAKAHTLA GOES HOME

YEAR after year witnessed fresh trophies of God’s grace being brought in through the faithful labours of the Bishop and his wife and their helpers. The Indians who had been brought to Christ then in turn sought to bring in others. Some of the truest missionaries were men who once had been degraded Heathen, and the Bishop could write



MRS. RIDLEY’S GRAVE

in the year 1893 the stirring words :—

‘ Here (in a village on the bend of the river) is a native teacher and one of my old boys as school-master, both of them members of the tribe they are striving to save. Twelve years ago I left there a Zimshian teacher I brought from Metlakahtla. Now the native Church has produced its own first stage of ministry. Three adults during the winter were prepared by them for baptism and are now baptized. Others are coming forward. There was not a single Christian in the nation among any of the tribes when I first saw them; now, though only a few are found, it is rare to find any body of Indians without some Christians among them. On the coast from the Skeena to the Naas Heathenism has been conquered by the Cross, and a similar process is in progress in the interior.’

How true was the work accomplished can be seen by yet one more quotation from a letter written by Bishop Ridley in 1896 :—

‘ No missionary can be dull among the Zimshian Indians, unless, failing in his duty, he keeps them at arm’s length. Where they give their confidence, they give no rest. They have an alertness of mind and purpose

which forbids stagnation. This is my seventeenth year among them, and yet I rarely pass a day without hearing something of interest or being presented with some strange problem to puzzle over. . . . When news of the Ku-cheng massacres\* came, how pitifully these Indians at our daily prayers besought the Lord to have mercy on the Chinese! “ Say again, dear Jesus, ‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ Oh, gracious Spirit, Thou art not quenched by blood. Let it make Thy garden soil strong to grow Chinese believers in.” ’

This spiritual life found its expression in practical self-sacrifice for the support of God’s work. For example, the Kitkatlas were the best hunters in the province, and when a new church needed to be built, on their return from otter-hunting they hung up three of the best otter skins in the old church as a thankoffering to God. These sold for £50 apiece. Besides this, they subscribed nearly £140 for the new church, and gave their labour without wages in its erection. In addition they collected cash to provide food for the builders, and the women cooked it for them.

\* The massacre of several C.M.S. and C.E.Z.M.S. missionaries at Kucheng in the Fukien Province of China, which occurred on August 1, 1895.

The one great cloud over the Bishop's life-work occurred when, in December, 1896, his devoted wife was called to her rest and reward. All through her illness the chapel was full of Indians night and day praying for her recovery. Until the last moment she delighted in having crowds of Indians coming to her bedside and speaking to them from the Word of God. In the Bishop's own touching words: 'Four races at the same moment held her hands and mingled their tears as she blessed them all. Besides all the mission party kneeling round, the room—a very large and airy one—was covered with silently praying Indians. For three days all work in the town was suspended. Many souls found the light during the death-struggle. In her death, she by her beautiful and tender words and patient endurance of agony drew more souls to Jesus than ever. It was victory on victory, triumph on triumph. Quite two hundred souls shared in the blessing.'

The sayings of some of the Indians afterwards were pathetically beautiful. Hannah said, 'She passed into the breakers from the shore, but has gone up on the farther side, beyond the dark arch, into the peace of angels.'

Another Indian woman remarked, 'She held her torch aloft. She never let it drop.

It never shone so before, and most splendidly as she lay down to die, her work done. She never kept back from us provision for our rough voyage in life. She saw us lying in the stones and dirt, and put her pure hands under us to lift us up.'

Roger, an Indian man, prayed, 'God bless the Society and bless the Church which sent so pure a soul to land on our shore and walk like an angel amongst us.'

And one of his fellow-countrymen exclaimed, 'Our mother gave her life for us; you now give her flesh to our keeping. Our hearts open wide at the thought of our rich charge. We feel it more than white men think. Her grave will be holy. Our children will have a place to learn how to live, and what is new to us—how to die. Our children will hear of the humble life of the greatest chieftainess, who lifted dirty Zimshians up and led them to Jesus.'

A few weeks later Bishop Ridley sailed for England, but before doing so he visited Kitkatla, there to confirm Chief Sheuksh and his wife. When on a London platform Bishop Ridley spoke of this event, he related with emotion that at the conclusion of the confirmation service a voice was heard as of a man sobbing. It was the voice of the converted chief. 'O God of heaven, have mercy upon us; we are orphans. O

God of heaven, Thou hast taken our mother, and now Thou hast called our father across the deep.      Take care of him by land and sea, and bring him back strong of heart.'

## CHAPTER IX

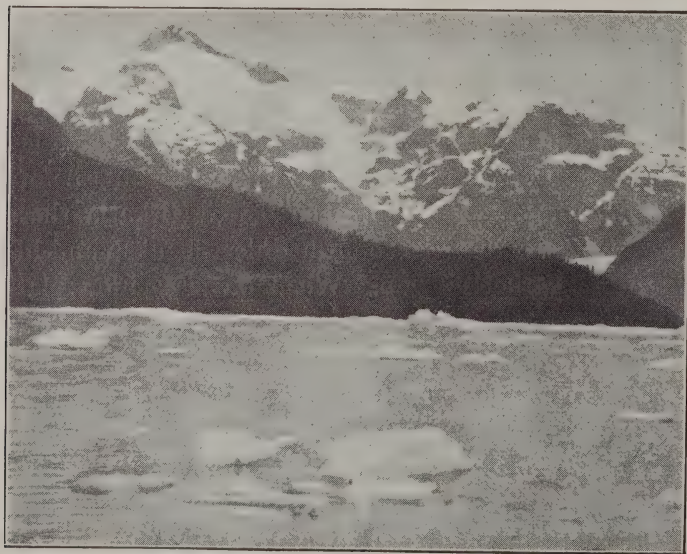
### THE VOYAGER AT REST

AT the time when the mother of Metlakahtla was called to her rest, a chain of flourishing mission stations, reaching from the mouth of the Skeena River almost to the watershed sloping towards the Mackenzie River prairie, was established. But to the far north, on the Stikine River, Satan's reign was undisturbed, and so many difficulties stood in the way that the desire of the Bishop's heart towards his people there remained unfulfilled.

Now, however, God's time had come. When the Bishop was in England he received offers of money and of personal service to start a Memorial Mission among these long-neglected Indians, from whom he had received a pathetic petition begging for a teacher.

On his return to his beloved work and lonely home, the Bishop threw himself with renewed devotion into his missionary journeys and visitation, and

among the miners who would come rushing into the newly discovered goldfields in Selkirk and Caledonia he began vigorous work. His perilous sailor experiences were renewed on the Skeena. He wrote:—



THE STIKINE RIVER, SHOWING FLOATING ICE

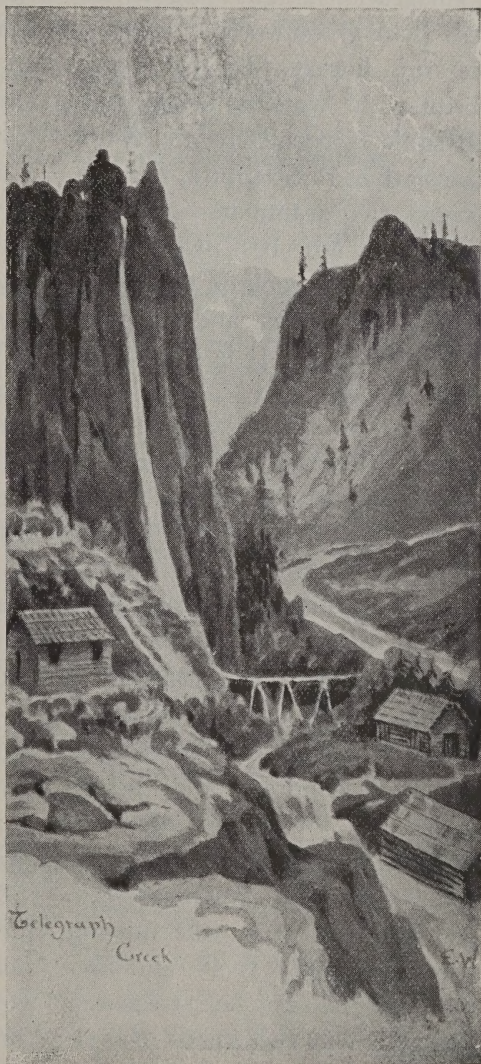
‘God is most merciful in sparing me from disaster amid these frequent perils. Some people have called it a charmed life; it is rather a living in the hollow of God’s hand.’

It is impossible in this short story to tell any of the thrilling incidents connected with missionary efforts among the gold diggers, or the wonderful results of pioneer work on the Stikine River. We can only give one more incident which stood out as a landmark in the life of Bishop Ridley. He was at Victoria, just about to start again for the goldfields, in July, 1901, when he received the terrible news that a fire had destroyed the village of Metlakatla—that his church, schools and own house were all gone. Three days afterwards he wrote the following particulars:—

‘At this season the whole population outside our missionary institutions is away at the salmon fishery on the Skeena River, so there was no one to use the fire engine. As fast as the children were sheltered in one building the fire chased them to another, until no place remained to go to. The buildings destroyed are the great church, the two day

schools, the boys’ industrial school, the Indian Girls’ Home, the White Home,\* the Church Army Hall, the guest house, the chapel and my

\* The two homes here mentioned were conducted by lady missionaries from England. The White Home for children not purely Indian has been entirely under the care of Miss West, a long-tried friend and helper.



TELEGRAPH CREEK ON THE STIKINE

own house, as well as many out-buildings, among them the boat-houses, containing all our boats, including my schooner. Nothing of it is saved. Only a few Indian houses were burnt. All the buildings were of cedar (a wood easily obtained in that region), hence the frightful rapidity of the great conflagrations. The loss is not less than £7000 worth. I mourn for my library, all my manuscripts—the work of many years on subjects peculiarly my own—translations of Scripture, folklore, poems, two grammars—one very complete, my best work—and material for a book on the origin, habits, traditions and religions of Indians. . . . It is my second great bereavement.'

But Bishop Ridley did not sit down helplessly to mourn for the desolation. He came to England and told his story to multitudes of sympathizing hearts, that were touched afresh when they heard of how Indians, who returned to find the mission buildings in ashes, had given, some shelter to the homeless children, and others money for the rebuilding. For example, the Bishop's own washerwoman gave as much as £20. She had worked for the mission house for twenty years, and joyfully yielded up her treasured savings. The two lowest contri-

butions from the Indians themselves towards their restoration fund were £10 each.

When Bishop Ridley went back once more to his mission station, it was with £7000, sufficient to cover the rebuilding of the church and mission premises. But he was never quite the same man again. He decided to resign his work to younger hands, and made an affectionate farewell tour of all the stations whose work he had fostered so long. In 1903 he left Vancouver for the last time, and on his way home he visited Japan, Australia and New Zealand, everywhere advocating the cause of foreign missions by voice and pen.

The veteran missionary spent the closing days of his eventful life in the home of his brother, the Rev. J. Ridley, rector of Pulham, near Dorchester, and from thence in 1910 he journeyed to be a delegate of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. At last, in his seventy-fifth year, Bishop William Ridley passed quietly away on March 25, 1911. Surely to the Sailor-Bishop an entrance was ministered abundantly into the haven of rest and reward.

May this simple record of his life be an incentive to others to follow in the same path of self-sacrifice and obedient devotion to the Lord of the harvest field.

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